

Commodity Movements Originating in Alaska: 1993

In Alaska, the CFS measured \$8 billion of goods weighing 24 million tons. Alaska accounted for approximately 0.1 percent of the value and 0.2 percent of the weight of total U.S. shipments. See attached table. The CFS data cover shipments by establishments in mining, manufacturing, wholesale, and selected retail and service industries. The data exclude most shipments of crude oil; therefore, the totals and percentages do not fully reflect the contribution of pipeline shipments.

The major commodities shipped by establishments in Alaska vary when ranked by value and by weight of the shipments. High-value commodities account for a higher proportion of total value and a lower proportion of total weight of shipments. The top five commodities by value were: petroleum or coal products; food or kindred products; fresh fish or other marine products; chemicals or allied products; and lumber or wood products excluding furniture. The top five commodities by weight were: petroleum or coal products; lumber or wood products, excluding furniture; chemicals or allied products; and fish or other marine products.

Local transportation of freight is important to Alaska's commerce. The distribution of commodities by domestic destination and distance of shipments reflects the importance of local transport. The CFS shows that in 1993, about 81 percent of the value and 82 percent of the weight of total shipments from Alaska were shipped to destinations within the state. About 47 percent of the value and about 54 percent of the weight of all shipments were between places less than 50 miles apart. In comparison, about 30 percent of the value and 56 percent of the weight of total U.S. shipments were between places less than 50 miles apart. In Alaska, about 52 percent of the value of shipments and 52 percent of the weight of shipments were between places less than 100 miles apart.

Almost one-fifth (19 percent) of the value and weight of all shipments from Alaska were to other states. The top five destinations by value of shipments were: Washington, Oregon, California, Texas, and New York. The top two destinations by weight of shipments were: Oregon and Washington.

Less than half of the commodities (45 percent of the value and 26 percent of the weight) were moved by trucks. Rail accounted for about 5 percent of the value and 9 percent of the weight of shipments. The CFS data confirm the rising importance of parcel, U.S. postal, and courier services that have emerged in recent years. In 1993, this mode of transport was used to ship 21 thousand tons of goods worth over \$181 million or 2 percent of the value of all shipments in Alaska. In comparison, about 9 percent of the value of total U.S. shipments were moved by this mode.

Table insert

The Commodity Flow Survey (CFS) is a comprehensive effort to learn where and how goods are shipped in the U.S. The CFS measures shipments of commodities by establishments with paid employees and engaged in manufacturing, mining, wholesale trade, or selected retail and services industries. Prior commodity surveys covered

shipments only by manufacturing firms. Commodity flows are estimated for a universe of approximately 900,000 establishments.

Data collected on individual shipments include total value, total weight, commodity type, modes of transport, domestic origin and destination; data for export shipments include the city and country of destination, mode and port of exit. Information is also be obtained on whether shipments are containerized or a hazardous material. Some firms provided data concerning on-site shipping facilities and access to shipping facilities, plus data on ownership and leasing of transportation equipment.

The CFS is conducted by the Bureau of the Census as part of the Economic Census. Funding and technical guidance is provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Initiated for 1993, the CFS is scheduled for 1997 and every 5 years thereafter for years ending in 2 and 7. Commodity surveys were conducted between 1963 and 1982, but data for 1982 were not published. No data were collected for 1987. Participants will report for a sample of shipments during a 2-week period each quarter during the reporting year.

The CFS is a mail-out/mail-back survey of 200,000 sampled employer establishments in selected industries. Establishments were selected by stratified sample, with strata based on geographic location and industry. Geographic strata are the 89 National Transportation Analysis Regions (NTARs), which provide nationwide coverage and are aggregations of Bureau of Economic Analysis economic areas. Within the strata, all establishments with annualized employment above a specified cutoff were selected with certainty, and the remaining smaller establishments were sampled with probability proportional to annualized payroll.

For 1993, each sampled establishment reported on a sample of individual shipments during a 2 week period in each calendar quarter. In addition, about 20,000 establishments will provide information on transportation facilities and arrangements in their final reporting period.

For further information about survey design and printed products, contact the Commodity Flow Survey Branch, Services Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233, or by calling 301/457-2805 or 2114. For information on related data programs and studies, contact the Bureau of Transportation Statistics at 202/366-DATA for voice, 202/366-3640 for fax, or CFS@BTS.GOV for e-mail.